

MOORHEAD PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
ACTION ITEM (COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED)

Agenda Item #7d
May 29, 2013

Approve Part II of the Wellhead Protection Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

The General Manager respectfully requests the Commission approve Part II of the Moorhead Wellhead Protection Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The Moorhead and Buffalo Aquifers play an important role as a redundant supply of water that may be needed in the event of a 1930s-type drought or contamination of the Red River. One component for protection of groundwater resources is mandated by the State of Minnesota and defined as “wellhead protection.” Wellhead protection is enforced under the State of Minnesota Wellhead Protection Rule and under Minnesota Statute 4720.5330. Wellhead protection is accomplished via a plan with two parts—Part I and Part II—and is required to be updated every ten years. Over the past two years, MPS staff has been in the process of updating its Wellhead Protection Plan (Plan) to comply with the Wellhead Protection Rule (Rule). To satisfy the Rule, Part I, utilizing specific hydrologic models, was updated to delineate the areas of aquifer protection. Part I was completed with the assistance of consultant Leggette, Brashears, and Graham and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). The updated Part I was approved by the Commission on January 8, 2013.

Part II generally defines the measures that MPS staff, along with other Local Units of Government, will enact to ensure the protection of these critical drinking water supply sources. Part II of the Plan was completed by MPS staff, with the assistance of consultant Cliff McLain. To complete the Part II of the Plan, and subsequently, the Plan as a whole, Minnesota Statute 4720.5350, Subp. 4, requires that a public hearing be held to gather input regarding Part II of the Plan. MPS staff will incorporate public comments into the Plan, as needed, based upon solicited input. The updated Plan was submitted to the Local Units of Government for comment on March 21, 2013. To develop the Plan, the Wellhead Protection Team has had held five meetings over the course of the past five months to discuss and amend specific measures for the Plan. The Wellhead Protection Team approved the Plan at its meeting on May 21, 2013. MPS staff is very excited about the involvement and input garnered during the development of the updated Part II of the Plan. The new and updated wellhead protection measures will be outlined during the public hearing on May 29, 2013.

Following incorporation of any public comments into the Plan, the Plan will be submitted to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources’ Board of Water and Soil Resources, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for review on June 7, 2013. These agencies will have a 90-day comment period to provide additional insight to the Plan. The final Plan is expected to be submitted to the MDH for approval by September 10, 2013. It is the intention of MPS staff to begin action on the new protection measures pending final approval of the Plan by MDH.

If members of the public would like a copy of the updated Part II Plan, it is available at <http://buffaloaquifer.com/index.php/wellhead-protection-plan.html>. In addition, copies of the Part II Plan will be available to the Commission and the public at the Commission meeting on May 29, 2013.

KEY ISSUES:

- Wellhead protection is enforced under the State of Minnesota Wellhead Protection Rule and under Minnesota Statute 4720.5330.
- Minnesota Statute 4720.5350, Subp. 4, requires that a public hearing be held to gather input regarding Part II of the Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS: None.

Respectfully submitted,



Bill Schwandt
General Manager

Division/Response Person: Kristofer Knutson, Water Division Manager

Attachments:

Part II of Wellhead Protection Plan (available on-line and at Tuesday's Commission meeting)